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Chiropractic Bill Shows the Power of Lobbyists and Money in State Government

MADISON – Assembly Bill 260 was one of the most lobbied non-budget legislative proposals for the first half of 2017, with lobbying groups spending 746 hours talking to legislators. The bill would allow chiropractors to perform physical exams on high school and 2 year UW college student athletes.

The non-partisan Wisconsin Ethics Commission, charged with tracking the activities of registered lobbyists, recently released their 6-month lobbying report for the first half of this year and AB 260 was near the top of the list.

The Wisconsin Chiropractic Association was the lone organization registered in favor of this legislation, with 25 organizations registered in opposition, including: the American Heart Association, the Wisconsin Medical Society, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association and a host of hospitals, health systems, and health professions.

“Despite serious concerns about the safety of youth athletics participants, the financial resources of one special interest group influenced enough legislators to get this legislation through the Assembly,” said Rep. Deb Kolste. “It says a great deal about our current system of government and where the power truly lies.”

The Chiropractic Association were rewarded for their time and money as AB 260 was voted out of the Assembly Committee on Health and passed the Assembly in June.

“What is perhaps most disheartening is that this bill was passed through the Assembly on a voice vote, meaning the individual votes of state representatives were not recorded,” Kolste added. A bill that received such heavy lobbying should be transparent and constituents should have the ability to know how their elected official voted.”

In comparison to AB 260, only two other Assembly bills received more lobbying time; the proposal to eliminate the state personal property tax (1,327 lobbying hours) and AB 348, which would authorize local governments to impose setback requirements for cell phone towers (990 lobbying hours).

The Wisconsin Ethics Commission 6-month lobbying report highlights the total amount of money and number of hours spent lobbying state government between January and June 2017. The full report can be accessed at www.lobbying.wi.gov/Home/Welcome.

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